

CONCERNING THE WESTERN SAHARA

Speech by

President Ahmed Sékou Touré
before the 17 th Summit of the O.A.U.

Freetown, July 3, 1980





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Mr Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Allow me first of all to warmly congratulate our Brother and Friend the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for his brilliant election to the head of our continental Organization and to wish him excellent health and especially full and complete efficacy in the exercise of his high functions.

We would also like to express our warmest thanks to the brother People of Sierra Leone for the enthusiastic and friendly welcome they accorded to all the African delegations who came to Freetown to discuss the solidary future of our Continent.

We salute our brother Mugabe who, with his colleague Joshua Nkomo, led the liberation methodically and courageously and with determination until final victory against colonialism and imperialism, thus enabling Zimbabwe to be present here as the 50th member of our Continental Organization.

We salute the courage and heroism of the valiant Zimbabwe people and we assure them of the total and permanent solidarity of the People's Revolutionary State of Guinea.

Mr Chairman and dear Colleagues,

At the present time fundamental problems preoccupy and even cause anxiety for our Peoples. These problems should have had priority in our debates, because they are of direct interest not only to present African equilibrium but also for the future which we want to be happy.

As we know, at this moment in time, Angola is occupied by racist armed forces from South Africa. Without a declaration of war, cannon, aircraft and tens of thousands of foreign soldiers are used against an independent People, a free State and, what is more, a member of our Organization. From the moment this session was opened, priority should have been given to this fundamental problem in order to indicate and affirm the fierce desire of our Continent to preserve its acquisitions and also to struggle resolutely with a view to rapidly ensuring the total liberation and effective unity of our Peoples. We should, in fact, consolidate acquisitions and pursue the struggle for new conquests.

The Namibia is today the subject of various publications and contradictory reports in the world. This problem also should have occupied, for hours on end if necessary, the attention of Heads of State and Government and all heads of Delegations, so that together they may discuss the methods of coordinating their activities in favour of the immediate liberation of the martyr people of Namibia. Here also the RSA throws down a challenge which, if not taken up in

various ways, will be a legitimate cause for criticism from future generations of our Continent.

A short time ago we also held an important Summit of our Organization, the Economic Conference of Lagos, which tackled a fundamental problem for the common future of our Peoples, that is: the problem of the economic integration of our States. Economic integration is not a circumstantial affair, it is a process for which the Extraordinary Summit of Lagos laid the methodological foundations, calling on each of our ordinary meetings to take stock and replenish the flame, convinced as we are that the economic and socio-cultural development of our Peoples is at once the justification of independence and sovereignty as well as the condition for independence and sovereignty. But since our debates began few references were made in speeches to this important Lagos conference. The question is do we really incarnate with the intensity demanded the real preoccupations of all of our Peoples. Each one of us knows at present that political liberation is an inevitable prior condition because it is an acquisition enabling us to forge ahead. But if progress begins only after political independence it is here also that the thorny problems of economic independence commence. The Lagos Conference made the importance of this problem quite clear. But once again it seems to have been put on a back burner. Have we the right to do so ? Our answer is "No" and we are going to demonstrate it.

In Addis Ababa in 1963 we met and we proclaimed our common desires as laid down in the terms of our Charter. We said we were guided by a common desire to establish and reinforce understanding between our Peoples, to establish and reinforce cooperation between our States in order to solve our problems and answer the aspirations of our populations for a solidarity integrated within a larger ensemble that goes beyond ethnic divergencies to harness ourselves to a great design, that of the responsible, dignified and happy future of our Peoples.

We were present in Addis Ababa and we thank God for being one of those who conceived this Organization. We had the privilege at the time of travelling around Africa to convince African governments one after the other so that the O.A.U. may be born.

As we said then, if yesterday we had the joy of having contributed to the birth of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa, today it is with great bitterness that we note that those who took part in that historic session are not very numerous in this room. Many have given their lives, victims of imperialism and colonialism, for having courageously defended Africa's interests. In this room today there are only four of them who had the privilege of taking part in the constituent session of the Organization of African Unity. We know what we are talking about. We are motivated by a single ideal, the African ideal. We have written it and said it. We intend to remain rigorously loyal to a line, that of dignity, responsibility and continuous progress of our Peoples. On this point, even

those who dislike us also know what we think. We have only one prayer, to have the necessary strength to defend this ideal up until our last moments. This is why we have always affirmed that death cannot make anyone recoil who is animated by such an ideal.

You see, since the start of this Session we had thought it best to keep quiet. But now for the past three days the problem of the Western Sahara has been discussed passionately. This problem is so thorny that an ad hoc Committee had to be formed with a view to solving it peacefully. Although a member of the ad hoc Committee, we thought it best not to intervene in the current debate on the Western Sahara. But at present allow us to say that personally we have serious anxieties about this subject. Those who do not believe in the legitimacy of our apprehensions and anxieties have only to remain engaged on the path of violence; facts will show later that these anxieties were perfectly well founded.

In any case world opinion and notably African peoples will know one way or the other how various positions were taken on this problem which threatens the life of our Organization.

Africa actually made many attempts at regrouping itself before joining the O.A.U. and we must say that it was after the first stages of the liberation struggle that was born the idea of a reorganization of the struggle's structures in order to give Africa one powerful Organization. We refer here to the struggle of the Tunisian people which was one of the first to

enjoy internal autonomy in 1954 and to proclaim its independence in 1956. Then there was the courageous struggle of the Moroccan people who won their independence in 1956. It is well known what means imperialism used for intimidation, privation, aggression and repression against the Moroccan Kingdom, even sending

Sultan Mohamed V into exile in Madagascar from 1953 to 1955. The Moroccan people remained united and firm despite the bayonets and cannon of French colonialism. Finally the people were victorious. His Majesty King Mohamed V returned from Madagascar and Morocco's independence was proclaimed. This must be remembered. Anyone who does not know the past, anyone who does not remember it, cannot live the present correctly much less build the future. It is by drawing on history, by questioning the collective memory of the People, that each People find the necessary impetus for their action in the present and in the future. Man has been given a memory to remember. Even religions are only acts of recognition of God and of men who act for good. This is why facts must be remembered and analysed courageously. One must not give problems a personal character. They must be analysed coldly and one must show the proper way for the improvement of the fate of the People on whose behalf one acts.

What does this mean ? In 1954 the F.L.N. (Algerian National Liberation Front) was organized and launched the armed struggle. The armed struggle decided by the F.L.N. was made possible thanks to the existence of independent African countries among Algeria's neighbours. And we must render homage to the countries which served as support bases, notably

Morocco and Tunisia. We followed this struggle. Brothers of the FLN including President Ben Bella, who was in prison in France, were in contact with us. A French militant and a friend of ours served as an intermediary. We were in constant contact with the Algerian prisoners. For this reason, in 1956 when France wanted to detach the Sahara from Algeria to form what it called the Joint Organization of Saharan Regions (JOSR) so as to be able to exploit the Sahara's oil and gas for its own benefit, we opposed this move, we denounced the manoeuvre and firmly supported the Algerian position against French colonialism. This is a reality. And in 1958 at the time of the referendum organized by France, partly to isolate the brave struggle of the Algerian people, one of the basic reasons for the mobilization of our people was to thwart the French colonialist manoeuvre, which led the Guinean People to say "No" to imperialism and proclaim their independence. This is well known. We should know how to remember it. As soon as Guinea was independent what were our first declarations ?

In Article 34 of the constitution of our new State it is stipulated, and we quote: "The Republic of Guinea is prepared to renounce all or part of its sovereignty attributes with a view to the creation of a larger ensemble" end quote. Loyal to this African option, the State of Guinea joined with the brother States of Ghana and Mali to constitute the United States of Africa. The first proclamation of this desire was made on November 23, 1958 in Accra, i.e. the 51st day after the proclamation of national independence on October 2, 1958.

These are also historical facts to which texts testify. Hence anyone can verify the facts. Back in 1960 we said: "As long as France does not recognize the independence of the Algerian people, Guinea will never sign a cooperation accord with her." This was not just yesterday. As long as an inch of African soil is colonized no country, however great or wealthy, can consider itself free. This line has been followed constantly. Facts are facts. We had a prolonged break in relations with France, for various reasons of course, but one of them, which we publicly notified to France, was its hostile attitude towards the legitimate demands of Algeria. We had relations of combattant fraternity with the Algerian peoples and admired their courage, determination, and supported their struggle, and saluted their victory as an important contribution to the liberation of the African Continent.

Similarly we should also recall that in 1960, at the time of the imperialist coalition against the young Congo State, the Zaire of today, our brother the immortal Patrice Lumumba came to Conakry to consult us about his ideas, asking us to do everything to mobilize African states which were independent at the time so that a meeting may be held so that a concerted effort could be made to give more efficacious shape to our solidarity. It was thus in answer to our appeal that His Majesty King Mohamed V, may his soul rest in peace and benefit by the benevolence of God, responded spontaneously thus: "We agree to give the Congo our solidarity and we propose Casablanca as the site of the

conference." Other colleagues also agreed but not all of them were able to go to Casablanca. We know why. The Algerian delegate said there were barely seven delegations in Casablanca, i.e.

Morocco, Algeria (represented by the GPRA or the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic), Libya, the United Arab Republic, Ghana, Mali and Guinea. Our deliberations produced a Charter for action, a Charter of struggle for the liberation of our Continent and for solidarity which we were to observe during the combat. It was the Casablanca Charter. The guideline of self-determination which was adopted was the essential content of the resolutions of the Casablanca Charter. We had the honour of defending the resolutions of the Casablanca Charter in the United Nations, and we did so and we are going to speak of this now.

At the start of this session it was our intention to keep quiet, but the debates have reached such a level, and our anxieties are so strong, that we prefer to explain ourselves, for tomorrow the attitude of each State will be judged. Ours will remain faithful to historical truth and social truth defended by our Peoples. Without any complex, before anyone, we will defend that truth. We fear only God and fear to do evil or commit crimes against men and peoples.

But what did the Casablanca Charter prescribe? You will be surprised, but the truth is the truth. We of Casablanca, we were guided by the principal contradiction, the opposition between Africa and imperialism, and all the decisions taken were essentially anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist in character.

France was still in Mauritania and Morocco presented us with a report justifying the legitimacy of its territorial claims to the Western Sahara, called the Spanish Sahara, and to Mauritania. Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Libya, Morocco, Algeria and the United Arab Republic known as Egypt today all voted unanimously for the resolution presented by Morocco against France and Spain. We have the resolution and can communicate it to you at your request. Facts are facts. What then were our guidelines ? To resolve the contradiction opposing Africa to colonialism and imperialism. We preferred that Morocco extend to Mauritania rather than France, a foreign power. We preferred that Morocco be in the Western Sahara rather than Spain, a foreign power. This was our position. But when later Mauritania proclaimed its independence and it was admitted to the United Nations, we told the others: "It is time we adapted ourselves to the facts. Our previous position was against France. Today this power has left the territory. Now it is our Mauritanian brothers who are in power, we can no longer support the Casablanca resolution." We then worked to bring Morocco to accept the reality. When it is said that in Addis Ababa in May 1963 Mauritania did not take part in the founding of the OAU it is an error; Mauritania took part as a founding member of the OAU as did Morocco and Guinea.

There therefore remained the problem of solving the Western Sahara question. The resolution presented by Morocco was supported by the UAR, Algeria, Mali, Guinea, Ghana and Libya; not only during the Casablanca conference but also in many other international bodies.

In September 1961 in Belgrade at the Constituent Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, an important resolution in favour of Morocco on the Western Sahara was adopted unanimously.

In favour of Algeria, the same conference adopted a resolution demanding the return of the "Algerian Sahara" to the territory of Algeria; it pronounced itself for the national independence of Algeria. We stress the term "Algerian Sahara" to underline the fact that there are Algerian, Moroccan, Malian, Libyan, Nigerian, Sudanese, Chadian, Egyptian and Somali Saharas. The Sahara is a horizontal band that divides Africa in two, and this is why we use the expressions "Africa north of the Sahara" and "Africa south of the Sahara", although we condemn the terms. But the reality is that this band existed and it was never an autonomous state called the Sahara State. History is history. There has never been a Saharan State nor a Saharan Nation!

Thus we remember that we all supported Morocco against Spain; we supported Algeria against France; so that each one may have its Sahara. But all went well. Morocco supported Algeria, and Algeria supported Morocco, and the rest of us added our support of our brothers of North Africa. This is the reality which cannot be denied nor camouflaged.

In 1956, having followed the decolonization problem closely, at first in the name of African trade unions, and then in the name of our Revolutionary Party, we can affirm that there was not a single liberation movement in Africa who could say that Guinea did not give it constant and resolute and unconditional support against imperialism and colonialism. We say "unconditional" because by acting in this way we kept away from opportunist

alliances. For us such an attitude is such a sacred duty that if we did not accomplish it we would have betrayed the aspirations of our own People. Moreover, our mission as African trade unionist leader always meant that above all the African Peoples had to be liberated entirely. Hence we can proclaim this with complete confidence. In 1956 therefore, we organized powerful demonstrations to support the Arab cause by defending the United Arab Republic on the Suez Canal issue and against imperialism which at the time was coalesced against Egypt.

In the name of the UGTAN (General Union of Black African Workers), which was the Pan-African Trade Union Federation at the time, there were demonstrations in 1957 in all French colonies to support the FLN, the Algerian National Liberation Front; just as support for Viet Nam and the FLN was one of the real criteria for membership of our Trade Union Federation, because we had the very clear idea that the main contradiction was born of foreign domination and as long as it was not liquidated then Africa would not achieve its integral personality nor all its dignity.

Thus we can tell you that in 1957 our country was not yet independent, but as soon as Sierra Leone obtained semi-autonomy, here we are in Freetown to congratulate the leaders of the Sierra Leone People. President Siaka Stevens is our witness.

In 1957 we also went to Lagos to congratulate our Nigerian brothers on their semi-autonomy. We also went to Ghana to congratulate our Ghanaian brothers. This indicates well our Pan-African vocation regarding the struggle we continued to wage to solve the contradiction fundamentally opposing the Continent to its colonialist and imperialist enemies.

In 1958 the independence achieved by Guinea was only a supplementary means for the African combat as you know. In 1959 we were the first among you all present here to recognize all the socialist countries and establish the first Embassies of the socialist states, including Cuba. African countries became independent before us, because we were the 9th independent country in Africa and the 82nd member of the United Nations Organization. Today there are 50 independent African states and 152 member states in the UNO, but we were the first country to defy the challenge of imperialism by opening on African soil in Guinea the first Embassies of all the socialist countries of Asia, Europe and Cuba. Here we can say that this policy with the socialist countries contained a thousand dangers:

- 1)--- It was the period of the cold war.
- 2)--- The Guinean example was a wide breach in the colonial system.
- 3)--- You were treated as a valet of Moscow, a red to be brought down if you had the slightest relationship with a socialist country.

4)— There was subversion inside the country through accusations of atheism; and everyone knows the cost of such accusations in a country with a large Moslem majority. But the truth had to be defended and one had to behave as a sovereign and a non-aligned state.

Our positions of support for all anti-imperialist movements are well known, they are an imperious duty dictated by our revolutionary consciousness. However we have never imposed our views and our desires on a liberation movement. We have always worked with numerous persons but we have never told any one of them: "This is the Guinean position, defend it!" Let anyone here contradict us and make us hang our head in shame. We do not corrupt any partner and we do not allow ourselves to be corrupted. We have a keen sense of dignity. So once again we are completely confident. And we claim the honour of being the first to make a State visit to Cuba in October 1960, at a time when it was under an American blockade. We had the honour of making the first African visit to China in 1960 and also to Viet Nam, when the risk was much greater than it is now because of the independence of a large number of countries in Africa. That is to say that we have always been guided by a sense of historical truth.

The "Casablanca Charter" group was a movement. Those African States which did not belong to this movement created their Charter, the "Monrovia Charter". We are going to tell you a secret. May all those who were founders of the OAU and who are absent from this room, because they are perhaps dead or have fallen from power, may they all forgive us. It was we who

presented a political report in Cairo analysing the situation in Africa and telling our brothers of the Casablanca group: "our Charter is of course anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist. It doubtless incarnates effectively the profound aspirations to liberty, responsibility, dignity and progress of our Peoples. But take care, one must always look for a correspondance between the subject and the objet so that we can achieve our objective and find the ways of achieving it. What can we use to answer the aspirations of our Peoples ? The maintenance of particular political orientations or a policy to transcend divergencies ? We consider that the second answer is the best one. If it is not adopted it is certain that in the medium term Africans will find themselves on the path of unity with difficulty and then we would be playing into the hands of our enemies. We are not alone in representing Africa. Whatever the quality of our ideas, the others also represent African states; we should scuttle the Casablanca Charter in favour of African continental unity. Some persons did not believe in the possibility of the proposal. They said: "Try it, if you succeed in convincing the Monrovia group it will be a good thing." We retorted that "even if we fail we will take responsibility for it." From Cairo we went directly to Addis Ababa to see the Emperor of Ethiopia, and the task was pursued from country to country until each colleague was completely convinced. We then sent a personal letter to each of the 30 Heads of State of the time analysing the African situation and posing questions. Each of them replied quite

honestly saying in effect: "unity is the best formula, if the conditions can be created I am ready to take part." When the replies reached us we published a brochure with the letter sent to each Head of State and their replies, and we concluded: "unity is achieved a common will is expressed." We proposed five colleagues for Founding Committee members and Addis Ababa as the site of the meeting. This is how the conference was held. Before going to Addis Ababa the main outlines of the Charter we mentioned were already written. That is to say that we know what we are talking about.

But let us return to the subject that preoccupies us: the Sahara. Spain colonized the Sahara for decades. During these decades France was in Mauritania. There was no armed liberation struggle in the majority of our countries because the conditions for the creation of such movements were not united. This is the time and place to put an end to a false theory which refuses to analyse historical facts and claims that only those who took up arms to liberate themselves are really free. But let us refer to history when all Africa was colonized where was there a liberation movement ? It is true that there was opposition to colonial penetration and we have the advantage of telling you that two of our grand fathers died in exile, Almmamy Samory Touré in Gabon and Bakary Touré in Madagascar. We have a sense of dignity and a tradition of struggle, so that when Africa calls we are always present. But if there was no armed struggle, coordinated in the form of Liberation Movement, it was because the conditions

were not available. Resistance to colonial occupation, whether armed or not, was permanent, it is true, but the politico-military fact of the Liberation Movement was not able to be achieved until recently. However when two, four or five independent countries emerged bases of support for liberation movements were created. Let us suppose that the PAIGC had been created in Guinea-Bissau without the support of Gambia, Senegal and Guinea, do you think that the PAIGC would have liberated Guinea-Bissau and proclaimed independence ? Our answer is no.. Do you think that Zimbabwe would be free if it were not for Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and the other front line states serving as support bases where nationalists were trained ? For this reason we must remember what unites us, it is our political finality; as for the forms taken by action, they depend on the means of which one disposes, but since the means did not exist at a certain point in time, no form of armed struggle could exist. Let there be no cleavage here therefore between those who liberated themselves with arms and those who liberated themselves with agitation of trade unions, organization and political education. It is the aim and the objective that counts to liberate our Peoples and reconquer national power usurped by foreign powers.

Let us now turn to the disposition which says that colonial frontiers inherited from the past must remain intangible. The Addis Ababa session during which this problem was debated was blocked for six hours. We were commissioned by the late President Nasser (may his soul rest in peace) to intercede with Somalia

so that the conference would not be deadlocked and so that the OAU may be born. We know the reserves expressed by various persons.

Today, in the light of situation, we can indicate to each one to renounce this or that position. But one must convince, for it is not by the argument of force that one must impose oneself but by force of argument. We say then that there are possibilities for secession in all our Nations, we know it, and in many countries we have seen it happen. Even today there are ethnic collectivities animated by the separatist spirit in certain states. If the mere fact of demanding independence constitutes the major reason, then we forget the difference between between the principal contradiction opposing us to imperialism and colonialism, and the secondary contradictions inside our societies.

If Tunisia and Morocco obtained independence in 1956, Mauritania also was independent in 1960 and in 1962 Algeria became independent. At the time we made a point of going to the United Nations to be the first to salute Algerian independence, just as we were at the United Nations to salute the independence of Nigeria in 1960. If at that period a nationalist sentiment existed in the Western Sahara, and warlike tribes were in permanent rebellion against the Spanish occupier, there would have been support bases, there would have been means available for an armed struggle against Spain, since the environment was independent. But up until then, we repeat in all honesty, only one single voice was raised, and this voice which we supported until 1972 was raised against Spanish domination in the Sahara, and it was the voice of the Moroccan State and People.

As you know the trilateral treaty was the subject of negotiations which we all followed. It was deposited with the Security Council in the United Nations. Why did the OAU not oppose it ? Because there was no conflict in North Africa. There were some reserves, such as ours which you did not understand but which the countries interested know well. Our reserve was that the Western Sahara be completely integrated with Morocco, which is normal; that Morocco renounce the integration of the Western Sahara with Mauritania, which is normal; that Morocco and Mauritania renounce that those who inhabit the area opt to become a free People, independent and sovereign, which is normal also; but the partition of the Saharan populations, divide a people, this we cannot accept. We condemned this principle at the time while others kept their counsel.

We remember that in 1963 there was a territorial dispute between Algeria and Morocco in the Tindouf area and war broke out. The OAU was already born. We are going to reveal something: immediately, without consulting Morocco, we cabled Morocco to inform it of the breaking off of diplomatic relations with it. From 1963 until 1975, during 12 years, in this affair of conflict between Morocco and Algeria we went further than Algeria since. in the meantime, Algeria was reconciled with Morocco without even informing us but we maintained our negative attitude. We broke away from France for the same African reasons. We broke with Morocco for the same reasons. But truth is truth. In international bodies, from the Casablanca Charter to the Non-Aligned Conference,

we maintained that the Western Sahara belonged to Morocco; we supported Morocco until 1972; there was no Polisario when Algeria had been independent since 1962. This is a fact. We have nothing at all against a people. You are familiar with our theory: the People's quality is not determined by number or size of territory, it is determined by its existence as a people. Each people is the equal of another. Here the political fact is the expression of a desire for independence. But up until 1972 we have not recorded such an expression, except by way of Moroccan démarches designed to obtain African support and that of the Arab States against Spain, a support which was given to Morocco.

We declined to make our position clear because we were a member of the Ad Hoc Committee. It was our duty to be silent about our personal views and to reconcile our brothers of the North, all Arabs and Moslems, do everything so that a round table meeting may be held, to attain the objective we aimed at: to stop the war and negotiate a solution of the problem. They are the same populations and no one can deny the community of combat linking all the Peoples of North Africa against imperialism with a war which has already cost dearly both in men and in money. For this reason it is our duty not to arouse passions or war which are not constructive; the perfect legitimacy of a cause cannot be determined by more or less interested alliances on the political plane; for a man of conscience, legitimacy should determine his positive attitude. In ten years you find yourselves again with the same brothers, but by drawing lessons from the passion with which some have intervened

they will regret it. One does not applaud the casualties of a war between brothers. One does not encourage killings between brother peoples. One must have a constructive attitude when one is among brothers.

It is true that we have admitted provisional governments in the OAU and we were among those who accepted it. Take the example of Roberto Holden, leader of the Angola National Liberation Front (FLNA). We appointed him as diplomat at the Guinean Embassy in New York with a Guinean diplomatic passport. We asked him to represent us on the U.N. Decolonization Commission. We were in favour of the admission of the Holden government to the OAU. But in the end the positions of the People's Liberation Movement of Angola (MPLA) turned out to be more just than those of Holden's FLNA. We had analysed the situation and had given our support to the MPLA, when Holden as the head of a Government was sitting among us. What did this bring us to ? With regard to so-called French Somaliland, there was a liberation movement in Ethiopia, a liberation movement in Somalia, and an opposition movement in Djibouti. But finally it was the movement from inside that was chosen by the People in the elections.

Equally, for the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) we fought to get it admitted to our deliberations. In Monrovia in 1959 Guinea imposed it as a condition of its participation. In fact the Conference did not want to admit the GPRA. We said that we recognized that it did not represent an independent state, that it was a Liberation Movement, but because

of the magnificent struggle that it waged courageously against French imperialism and colonialism, we should accept the GPRA in our ranks to demonstrate to France our complete solidarity with the combattants. We went so far as to make quite clear our firm determination not to occupy our seat if the GPRA did not occupy its seat. That was in 1959 in Monrovia. When the GPRA representative came to Guinea we were asked not to receive him and threatened. We gave orders for the Algerian flag to be raised and, in the room next to ours, to receive the GPRA representative who is at present: Minister of Foreign Affairs, brother Ben Yahia who is present in this room ! Thus we continued the same struggle. As for Nigeria, a separatist movement was created proclaiming that Biafra was born, that a government was formed, fixing the statutes of the new state; we refused to recognize it. If in Nigeria it was imperialism that dominated, and Biafra had set up a government against this imperialism, we would have been one of the first to recognize it and ask for OAU support; but there is the Federal Republic of Nigeria, an independent state member of the OAU, and here on a secessionist and tribalistic basis brothers set up a state, giving itself a constitution, and the whole province waged a war of secession. We said we would be on Nigeria's side. We must say that some of those who led the secession were our personal friends. When a personal friend spoke on the radio to proclaim secession we wrote to him to denounce him and tell him that we were no longer his friend, that we were on the side of the national unity of the Nigerian Federation.

We repeat that we are keeping to the historical facts. When we became President of the Government of Guinea on October 2, 1958, the Press called me "the youngest President in the world." Today, thanks be to God, we are the Vice-Dean of African Heads of State, the Dean being the honourable President Habib Bourguiba. Hence we have watched the film of the African liberation combat and seen all its sequences. Even if we are not intelligent we have a certain experience. We will never treat a problem appertaining to the principal contradiction in the same way as a problem which we consider to be internal to our Organization. This is a line of conduct which we intend to remain faithful to.

Let us go further and examine the case of our Saharan brothers. They have the right to form a liberation movement. They have the right to ask for our support. We can give it just as we can refuse it, but they have the right to demonstrate their will. This is a fact. But if two African states, members of the OAU, are at war, are we, yes or no, going to intervene to obtain a ceasefire and settle the problem opposing two member states in a peaceful fashion ? When the problem is internal only the peaceful solution must prevail, when it is external then it is violence.

When we give assistance to a country to exercise violence against imperialism it is our duty. Thus, if we have anxieties it is because some of us tend to confuse ideology with politics. Ideology is always abstract, it sets down the finality, it is the choice of an ensemble of coherent ideas defining relations between man and nature, between man and man, the principles of life, methods

of analysing problems, the principles of behaviour when faced by problems. But politics is a concrete fact, a question of translating ideas. If you like, Politics is an idea expressed in concrete terms, although one must still know what concrete means ! We are the Leader of Guinea, and perhaps if we were in Algeria we would not be a Leader. One must be familiar with the environment in which one acts, use the proper language, transform nature with the knowledge of things and ways of using them. Here inside the OAU our anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist ideology constitutes our identity. We want to make Africa responsible and dignified, and this is also our identity. However there are differences between us; our regimes do not have the same constitution, do not obey the same principles, do not use the same political and social systems. But if we turn these differences into obstacles then intolerance sets in and each one of us will think he has the key to all problems. Hence we must transcend these differences to take our identity into account, reinforce our community of combat, because unsolved problems are bigger than those that have been solved. So far in fact we have not been able to fix the prices of our raw materials, we have not managed to integrate our transportation and telecommunications, currency is under foreign sovereignty in many countries, et cetera, all things that command the African future. We have not solved the problem of self-sufficiency in food and we are tributaries of the exterior in many fields.

With regard to the question of the Western Sahara it should be stated that problem here concerns the Ad Hoc Committee which has been formed, and we must inform you that in Khartoum, after the session, it was we who proposed a sub-committee composed of two colleagues, General Obasanjo and General Moussa Traoré who were to undertake steps and make efforts to obtain a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Afterwards, this sub-committee reported on its activity. But there was a procedural error to which we will draw your attention now so that you may really know what we think deep down. This report should have been submitted to the Committee before the Summit. We have nothing against anyone, perhaps people were in a hurry, but we did not attend any meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. We simply saw documents distributed and we were thus placed before the accomplished fact. Should the Press have been told that the procedure was wrong? We thought it better not to out of respect for the OAU. So we kept silent. At the time of the vote for the adoption of the report submitted to the 16th summit we replied: "Guinea votes because it is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee". At the Monrovia Summit you heard us express our reprobation of the form. But if we do not clarify and do not render public today our reserves of that time, no one would understand why we are not in the same position as certain members of the Ad Hoc Committee. For this reason we give the required details in order to avoid any untruthful interpretation or confusion regarding our ideas and attitudes regarding the Western Sahara problem.

Three weeks before the meeting that was due to be held in Monrovia, and it must be recognized considering that we will never tell lies for gold or silver, nor for titles, dignity being doing what one says and saying what one does, and lies disqualify men, Morocco wrote to the President of the OAU for two reasons:

1)--Morocco expressed surprise that two members of the Ad Hoc Committee or Committee of Sages, that is to say Presidents of Mali and Tanzania had taken position publicly in favour of the Polisario against Morocco. As is known, Morocco disputed the neutrality and objectivity of these two members which it rejected.

2)--Morocco asked for a postponement of the meeting of the Committee of Sages to a later date.

The Chairman of the OAU considered that the problem was important. He went to Conakry where we had a meeting of four hours with him.

We told him: "it is not a question of transforming the Committee of Sages into a tribunal. The efficacy of the action to be undertaken will be a result of acceptance of a ceasefire and above all the reconciliation of brothers who fight and kill each other. Keep our intimate positions to ourselves and let us do everything to reconcile them. But if we want to decide around a round table we must firstly analyse all the arguments so that a just solution may come out of our meeting. Morocco asks for a postponement? Well then let us accept it but let us ask it to propose a new date." It was three weeks before the meeting and the other members had not yet moved. If Monrovia had taken into consideration what we were agreed on perhaps the members would

have been notified of Morocco's request for a postponement and the meeting would have been held at another date; and perhaps one may have been able to make a step forward. But the meeting was held at the original date which was maintained despite the request for a postponement.

Let us now talk of procedure: what is an Ad Hoc Committee, a commission of a parent organization ? It is a working instrument. It has no sovereignty to exercise and cannot publish its report nor its conclusions. It was designated by the Summit of Heads of State. Respect due to the Heads of State demanded that all resources for a ceasefire and reconciliation be mentioned in the report, that if there were difficulties they be mentioned also, and that the Committee go before the Summit to present its report. Unfortunately, in Monrovia, the radio published all the motions and resolutions adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee, and in one of them the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and all International organizations were asked to take into consideration no other position except that dictated by it in the name of Africa. We are a member of the Ad Hoc Committee, we do not accept this kind of procedure; others can accept it but we do not accept it. A working commission is a working commission; a part cannot substitute for the whole, and the whole is the sovereign ensemble of Heads of State. Every Government has its working commissions but none of them will publish a decree or a law without the knowledge of the Government. If we do not take care, passionate examination of problems and the political alliances apparent in our debates will certainly lead to a weakening of

the OAU and division between OAU member states.

The OAU is not a trade union of Heads of State, nor a political party with a single ideology to practice. The OAU comprises sovereign states obeying different ideologies. We must take this reality into account and solve our problems in a unitarian and realistic spirit.

What do we want ? Let us be clear. If we want the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) to be a member of the OAU it must be stated clearly. If this is the desire of the Saharan populations we will be your vanguard in order that this desire may be respected. And if we want the Polisario to be considered a liberation movement we must say so. If the Ad Hoc Committee which has presented the report in question still has your confidence you must show it. Former liberation movements present here today as representatives of independent and sovereign states you were not supported by all states, nevertheless you are here as the legal representatives of free Nations.

We members of the Ad Hoc Committee met before the opening of the present session. Except for one reserve that was formulated, all other members agreed with the conclusions that the President of the Republic of Senegal presented as current chairman of the OAU. We also merit some respect; and if we came to Freetown a day ahead it was because this Committee was to meet; otherwise we would not have come on Monday, June 30, 1980.

The aim of our Committee of Sages is first to stop the war so as to re-establish a just peace. When we hear one say "we will continue the war" and another say "we will continue the war" this raises a question ! If we must back up these bellicose positions we would never have created an Ad Hoc Committee, and we would not be here. If we are talking about procedure and debating today it is to settle an acute problem for the benefit of our Peoples. Hence we should not follow two opposed groups in their attitudes. We ought to be perspicacious and exigent to get them to accept conditions for stopping the war. For the Saharan People, be they 74,000 persons or 74 million or a billion persons what interests us is the people's will. According to our ideology, the people are the only source of legitimacy and legality, the only container, subject and object of the law. Only its freely-expressed will counts. We ask you not to confuse the problem under discussion with certain problems which we have solved already. The PAIGC, African Party of Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, fought against Portuguese imperialism, the FLN, the Algerian National Liberation Front, against France, the Frelimo against Portugal. Because here it is a question of Morocco, an OAU member state which moreover took the initiative in the struggle for the liberation of the Western Sahara against Spain during a period of over ten years. We are ready to change opinion as soon as we learn that when consulted the Saharan people expresses the desire to create an independent state. We say we respect the will of the people. If the people say "my territory must remain integrated with the Moroccan patrimony" we are ready

to respect the voice of the people. If they say "no, I prefer to become completely independent and sovereign" we are ready to respect its will. If they say "I want to become part of an ensemble with Mauritania" we will assist in making concrete this freely-expressed desire. Whatever the people's will it is an order which we must obey. This is the undeniable right of peoples to self-determination.

The right to self-determination is resolution L514 of the U.N. General Assembly of 1960 which has made it into an international law. But what is the origin of the resolution ? Forgive us, but it was we who presented it to the United Nations in 1959. We are the author and we expressed this desire for the first time in a speech to the United Nations. The first translation of this resolution was by an Algerian, Chanderly, and another by a Tunisian, Masmoudi. The discussion was open, the atmosphere heated, and the resolution was not voted during that session. Later the Soviet Union asked for the resolution to be amended so that all the socialist countries could assemble around her. We gave our agreement. The final draft of the text was substituted for the first.

We went to the General Assembly in 1960 to take part in the debates. The day after our speech in the UNO we had to leave for Cuba. But then we saw on television while we were still in New York that the cold war was on just as we are in the process of doing in another dimension here. There were 75 speakers down to answer President Nikita Khrushchev, the Secretary-General of the Soviet Communist Party, who took off his shoe to beat on his desk. The cold war was ignited. The resolution suffered from it and its adoption was compromised. We postponed our journey to Cuba. We

returned to the session to address the Assembly. We analysed the situation and said Africa was not a piece of merchandise, that our dignity ought not to be transformed into merchandise and an object of propaganda. In the name of Africa we appealed to all those who were to speak on the issue asking them to refrain from taking the floor, that the debates be stopped and that a vote be taken. In this way the resolution was voted unanimously. We thank God for having represented Africa on that day. Therefore, we know the resolution. Anyone can violate it, but we cannot, as we have always said. But must the terms be defined exactly ?

A liberation movement can demand the right to self-determination in the name of its colonized people. But if the SADR already considers itself an independent and sovereign state to be admitted as such as a member of the OAU, can the self-determination principle still be a just demand ?

This is why, if we really want a solution, we must say: "The problem has its solution at an African level. We are going to consult the Saharan population, whether there are 95% on the territory of Morocco and 5% in Algeria does not matter. All the Saharan populations will be assembled and we will consult them. If the majority say "we want to remain Moroccans" we will follow the path of the majority. If a majority say "we want autonomy in the Moroccan framework" we will say agreed. Or if a majority say "we want to form a separate sovereign state apart from Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria" we will say: "brothers of Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania, accept the voice of the Saharan populations. Africa asks you to, now, as members of the OAU,

give your assistance, aid, friendship and support to this new state so that it may make up for the considerable time lost during the period of Spanish domination." The essential thing for the moment therefore is that there should be a consultation of the populations; as long as they have not expressed their will the diverse positions will be arbitrary and there will be an escalation of violence.

This is the only just position we should have adopted in this chamber if we wanted to be at the service of the Peoples of Africa, to never utilize a problem concerning the future of a People to settle other affairs or satisfy other passions. But if you do not wish to take the dignity of Nations into account, and impinge on national pride, you risk leading the OAU into a dead end. The Saharan wants to be a State and a People, but Morocco also is a People and a State.

We are familiar with Morocco. We went there in August 1959 to support Moroccan popular forces and the trade union movement. We gave lectures in our capacity as a trade union Head of State in all the labour exchanges of Morocco, we did it for democracy.

We even interfered in Morocco's domestic affairs and we admit it here. We had relations with all the progressives all the time from 1954 onwards. But we ought to tell you, dear brothers, that the whole of the Moroccan Opposition, including the Moroccan Communist Party, the trade union movement, the students, and all Moroccan bodies form one single bloc opposed with their King to any division of Moroccan territory. This is a reality. Even if we wanted

to support our Saharan brothers we could not do so by force. Let us convince our Moroccan brothers: "all you have said about the past is true, but make a sacrifice in the name of Islam, they are sister populations. They want to form a State; accept the political promotion." We can convince by using reason; and the solution that will arise out of this conviction will have the chance of being applied to make peace in North Africa. But if you want war we do not want a war between brothers. We say so frankly. Not only does the war risk getting worse, but as someone said it may be internationalized and it may also divide the OAU and the Arab League, we tell you so right now.

Certain persons have taken the liberty of making threats when it is a question of explaining and convincing.

With regard to the statutes, Article 25 of the internal regulations of the OAU is on page 53 of the brochure on the OAU which we have here: "to be adopted all resolutions and decisions must be carried by a two-thirds majority of members of the Organization". With regard to Article 28, concerning the admission of a free African state, independent and sovereign, there was no dispute over Guinea-Bissau for example; as soon as we learned that the PAIGC had proclaimed a state it was admitted as a member. We were not consulted on the admission of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique or Angola, which were taken for granted; no procedure, we are in them, they are in us; but this is not the case with the Western Sahara. Things must not be mixed up. Until proof of the contrary is provided, Morocco is a member of the OAU. If the

problem posed here is the expression of the will of the Saharan People we will support that will. Whatever the number of the population of a People we are for the People; let this be clear; but there must be a democratic expression to convince Morocco, a democratic expression to convince everyone.

As for ourselves we tried in 1976, we reveal this for the first time, we tried to interest ourselves actively in the problem. We sent delegations to Morocco and Algeria. We never mentioned this, not even in Guinea and much less so elsewhere. The militants of our own party did not know about it. We proposed a final text to Morocco and Algeria and we received their replies. They were both agreed on our proposals for a definitive solution of the conflict, and we were very happy because the end of this painful war was getting near. But, afterwards, the process was blocked by the Algerians.

Indeed, a few days after the 13th OAU Summit the late President H. Boumedienne sent us brother Yakher asking us to "suspend the démarches in progress at the time until after the session in Mauritius". In the same period, Mauritania was subjected to a military aggression, which allowed us to better realise what was at stake...

We do not wish to go into details. The process of settlement of the conflict was stopped despite ourselves, and for this reason we told the Algerian Government's special envoy: "we will not discuss this problem any more since we have found a solution for it! When consulted the two brother countries were agreed and that

was the best solution. But since you want war we will not discuss the problem any more." This is why we have not talked about it since then. But if we say nothing at this 17th summit, when certain persons have said that there are founding fathers of the OAU here and many are appealing to us, if we did not take the floor some people will say we are resigning. But no, dear colleagues, it is not a resignation ! We want to avoid the spectacle of a division in the OAU when we have other important problems to solve. The Moroccan People with 20 million inhabitants, the Mauritanian People, the Algerian People, all are interested and concerned. We ought to treat them with the same respect and interest. We should not side with one or the other.

The most efficacious and just thing to do is to bring together all those who are concerned and interested for a negotiated solution.

We have as an example the decolonization process of Zimbabwe. Who was the most engaged of the front line member states, Mozambique, Tanzania or Zambia ? But these states cannot say they did not encourage the struggle, nor participated directly or indirectly in the negotiations to find the solution of independence of the Zimbabwe People. Take also the case of Guinea-Bissau. Everyone knows Guinea-Bissau counted on all sincere African countries loyal to the cause it defended, and the PAIGC did well to accept negotiations around a table in Algiers with the participation of Algeria and Portugal. Everyone also knows that the African Party for the

Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, PAIGC, was supported unconditionally by Algeria and Guinea. When one is interested in

a conflictual situation one should necessarily take part in the solution, all the more so when one is concerned. But when one of the parties concerned by the Sahara conflict declares that it does not want to take part in any negotiation, while it is supporting the war effort under way, we ought to oblige it, fraternally and amicably, to take part in the negotiations with a view to finding a solution. For this reason, we appeal to the wisdom of one and all. Let us forget what divides us at the present time, and let us take into account what should unite us and concerns our common future.

The war going on at present risks leaving deep scars which will make the re-establishment of mutual confidence difficult and prevent active cooperation between our Peoples. For this reason, even if Article 28 concerns the admission of new members, it is the Secretary-General's duty to answer a question asked of him. Article 27 comes before Article 28, it was raised, and if it had not been raised when the Secretary-General was speaking, one could have said: "it is finished, the reserve should have been made before recognition of the SADR was announced by a simple majority of twenty six votes." But Morocco, according to the Secretary-General, formulated a contestation and the OAU Secretary-General cabled the text of it before we arrived here. Morocco is a member state, whether you like it or not. The OAU

is a voluntary Organization, each one of us joined it voluntarily. We do not want Sierra Leone to be a place of division and the breaking up of the OAU. But if confusion sets in, the OAU will break up. We tell you so. We have our statutes which say: "whenever the interpretation of a statutory disposition is requested by a State, the conference must decide by a two-thirds majority". Morocco has requested, and it is its legal right to do so, the interpretation of the notion of an African independent and sovereign state. This demands that we decide first of all on the prejudicial question; as soon as it is posed it stops all discussion. What the Secretary-General told us he should not have done because there is a prejudicial question; this is logical; and if there is no discipline, the OAU will not consolidate itself. We are not a Party here, we are an inter-state organization. If it were a congress we would be free to refer to the joint ideological line to decide all litigation. But we are not a Party, we are not in a congress, we are in a session of Heads of State. The statutes unite us as we elaborated, discussed and adopted them. And why did we talk in Monrovia of a two-thirds majority? Because all decisions submitted to the Assembly and requiring a vote demand a two-thirds majority nominal vote. Each member state can call for a nominal vote to demand respect for one of the dispositions of the Charter; even if one is unhappy with such a procedure it exists and must be respected. But let us suppose that even 49 states voted to recognize the SADR, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, would that stop the war instantly? No! since independent states can be at war. Yet what we are seeking is to put an end to the war. Innocents are falling. That is the

painful aspect and we cannot subscribe to the path of genocide between us for any reason whatever.

This, then, brothers, is the objective: to stop the war. There are only two ways of settling this conflict. The first is war; one destroys the other and is victorious by physical and material force. The second way is the peaceful way which begins with negotiations, with the force of arguments, with the interpenetration of feelings until a common will is born to set out on a new path. This is the one prescribed to us, the peaceful path. It is viable, it is the solution. Hence, we do not want a victory for anyone, we want victory for our Peoples. And we repeat: the sole and unique source of legality and legitimacy is the People. The sole reference for all acts having historical and social scope is the People. So let us agree: if you want to renew the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee renew it. But if you admit that the Saharan state exists, that it is a member of the OAU, the Committee has no further *raison d'être*. This independent state will be at war with another independent state. And when you have already taken a negative stand in relation to a state, the state will also mobilize friendly armies and Africa will be at war against Africa. If you want it, we would never want it. For this reason, the President of Nigeria told you that there was an Ad Hoc Committee; if you renew its mandate it will continue its *démarches* and there will be nothing against it, Morocco having said: "we will abide by the proposal of President Senghor, we will answer the appeal with all parties concerned."

Hence we have already found the way. If the current Chairman, the President of Sierra Leone, decided even within one or two weeks to convene the Ad Hoc Committee, the interested and concerned parties will answer the call and attempt the final reconciliation. Everything will be done to favour an entente between brothers. What preoccupies us is the future. If the peaceful path exists it will be taken. If it does not exist there is no point in keeping this Committee. Because Nigeria is a member of the Committee it has proposed that everything be done so that the interested and concerned countries accept the dialogue in order to put an end to this painful conflict. Mauritania which was concerned and is now only interested, Mauritania, when it took the floor, said that the Polisario and Morocco must engage in a dialogue, but the interested countries like Algeria must help them; this is justice. If the interested countries do not help them, it will be a dialogue between deaf people. The Sudan, another member of the Ad Hoc Committee, has made the same proposal. We are a member of the Ad Hoc Committee and we have made a similar proposal. If it is not accepted the Ad Hoc Committee must be dissolved.

The admission by a simple majority is contested by the prejudicial question posed by Morocco. This prejudicial question must be answered by a two-thirds majority before the admission. If the two-thirds majority is not obtained by the prejudicial question, those who have recognized the Saharan Arab Republic are free (they did so in all sovereignty) to continue to support it.

But this recognition does not engage the OAU, nor does it follow that the SADR is admitted as a member of the OAU. As long as the statutes of the OAU are not respected no irregular decision will engage the responsibility of the OAU. Things must be clear.

Dear Brothers, painful problems like that of the Middle East have not been discussed by us and so we are going to say a few words about them. With regard to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the first Head of State to have paid it a visit in a camp was curself. On Palestine soil we said: "even if the world abandons your cause, even if the Arabs betray you, Guinea will remain loyal to your cause; it will be at your side until victory." After the Israeli aggression of 1967 you waited for how many years before breaking with Israel ? As for Guinea, in the first days of the war between Egypt and Israel it expelled all Israelis from the country. You, you waited several years to break off relations. We do not behave in the same way. But the development of the situation in the Middle East is in a stage that demands that Africa manifests itself. The Arabs do not agree with the Camp David accords and they have said so, it is a fact, but America has manifested itself. Europe has just manifested itself. It has made proposals. What is stopping Africa from studying in depth the subject and making proposals, courageous ones susceptible of stopping this war which has lasted 32 years ?

Hence we need a sense of responsibility and to cultivate love of historical truth. The progress of the People and of all Peoples should be the point of reference for all our ideas and attitudes as a basis for determining everything. For this reason we must use this point of reference regarding the Saharans, and support all the decisions and aspirations that would arise out of a consultation. Apart from this way there is only the way of war and adventure and we ask you not to take this path. We ask you to be firm on a peaceful position for reconciliation of our Arab brothers. Whatever the solution, if the war is stopped, if the populations are preserved, if peace is established, we can obtain cooperation which is the indispensable element for African stability.

We therefore appeal to everyone to get out of the atmosphere of passion and aim at a single objective: the victory of Africa. We launch an appeal to everyone for them to get the capability of stopping this war, of reconciling all the brothers in the area and put them on the path of cooperation. When speaking of African integration the Sahara problem should be examined from this point of view. There is only one path leading to this noble objective and it is the path of negotiation. One must convince with reason and sentiment and not resort to force. One must not use the argument of force but force of argument.

Today we have cannons, and we could use bombers to kill each other, but let us use them elsewhere to combat those who humiliate us, and let us use reason to reach an agreement within our family of Africa.

Forgive us for taking up so much of your time, dear colleagues, but we wanted to make our attitude clear.

Each one of us is free to act. The People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea for its part will remain loyal to the OAU. It abides by the statutes of the OAU. It will never violate them to please anyone. We will please only Africa. For this reason, as long as the statutes are not respected, we will fight, we will express ourselves before international and African public opinion for the respect of the OAU and respect of the legal Charter of our unity.

In conclusion we remind you of our appeal to choose the path of negotiation and fraternity, and to abandon the path of war, because even if victory is won by war, it would leave sequels that would oppose us continually.

We hope that the OAU will triumph in its debates and that God will guide us to the happiness of our Peoples and peace in the world.

Ready for the Revolution

Ahmed Sékou TOURE

CLOSING SPEECH * AT THE 17TH SUMMIT
OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (O.A.U.)
MADE BY PRESIDENT AHMED SEKOU TOURE
Freetown, July 4, 1980

Mr Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

It is our honour in the name of our Conference to convey the sincere thanks of all Heads of State and Government of the OAU to the current Chairman of our Continental Organization, the illustrious Head of State of Sierra Leone, the indefatigable combattant who led the struggle at the head of his People to record for his Nation great victories in all fields. We wish him again, in the name of everyone, excellent health, longevity and especially complete efficacy in the accomplishment of his high mission as the guide of the destinies of our Organization for the coming year.

We convey to the valiant People of Sierra Leone our sincerest thanks for its permanent mobilization during the days we have passed among them, to signify to all Africa their complete willingness to take part fully in the African combat for progress.

We also thank all the participants in the 17th Summit who have contributed to the success of the Summit, and who have

dissipated all anxieties and doubts about the irreversible character of our Organization's march towards the ideals of liberty and progress proclaimed by its Charter. We know that even though certain viewpoints were somewhat passionate, if statements by certain people were more or less sour, all this had but one and the same aim, to engage Africa in more powerful solidarity, and more active, based on mutual confidence and favouring, at each stage of our Continent's history, the unity of action of our Peoples and governments. Thus out of the diversity of arguments and positions has arisen a convergence of all minds towards the same aim: the reinforcement of the common bases of action in the exclusive interest of our Peoples.

The struggle against imperialism, the combat against colonialism and neo-colonialism, the combat against under-development constitute the common denominator accepted by all, and the struggle for the complete liberation of Africa mobilizes us, our Peoples and our consciences. We still have on the agenda crucial problems that demand the rigorous, rational and constant utilization of all our physical and intellectual energies. It is a question notably of liberating Namibia whose existence as a colony is shameful to all humanity, because we well remember that South West Africa was a Germany colony, like Tanzania when it was Tanganyika and North Cameroon which has become an integral part of the United Republic of Cameroon. The situation is the same for Togo which is also liberated today. The U.N. Security Council has taken away South

African tutelage over Namibia. Our continent is therefore placed before its responsibilities, since South African Republic domination over Namibia no longer has legal justification, and for this reason we must meet the challenge launched by imperialism and rehabilitate ourselves by making an effective contribution to the acceleration of the decolonization process for the brother People of Namibia.

We must also remember the shameful situation created in Angola by the South African racists. Yesterday, like many of you, we received a message from the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, our common friend, our brother in arms, the President of the Socialist Republic of Cuba, comrade Fidel Castro, drawing our attention to the situation prevailing at present in Angola, and asking our States to react vigorously so that the acquisitions of the anti-imperialist combat of Angola may be preserved. We are sure that each one of us on his return will not fail to alert the Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations, faced by the criminal activities of imperialism in southern Africa, to protest most energetically on behalf of his People. Each one of us should mobilize even more the conscience of African masses with regard to the South African Republic's insolence unrivalled in barbarity by any régime however Fascist.

The struggle for Africa's integration and economic development was mentioned in speeches and the action plan adopted by the special Lagos summit should from now on guide our activities, because if political liberation is a prior condition, we must know that only

economic liberation will make us really independent. Africa is not a poor continent. If we speak of poverty and insufficiency it is because we have not yet pooled the immense moral, intellectual and material wealth of our continent and the numerous ways at hand, not to mention the most diverse potential whose effective development could make Africa a powerful entity on the economic plane immediately.

We are right therefore to draw up a plan of action for the economic integration and development of our continent, but, at all times, we must improve our working methods. We are an Organization which has the duty and the right to adapt itself to the various phases of our Peoples' evolution, to seek ways that exist and increase continuously, and to find the best conditions for using them with a view to accelerating the political liberation process, as well as the economic and social liberation process of our common fatherland, Africa. Of course, we are living in a period in which this country needs that country, but this does not mean that a needy country should be "absorbed". If we are to receive from others, we should do so with dignity and not forget that we have lived with our own forces and we will live better if we stop dispersing our efforts and means.

In a word we must liberate ourselves from all forms of alienation and we can do so. Pre-colonial Africa did not need any other continent to elaborate its civilization, to determine its relations between Africans and nature, to determine the quality

of relations to be established inside African society. Africa has always shown ability, imagination and creativity. Colonization came to interrupt Africa's march. Nearly all of us have suffered the hard trials of colonialism which correspond to an eclipse of our history insofar as this scourge plunged us into a context of irresponsibility and indignity. But today, thanks to struggle and by means of struggle the majority of African countries have

reconquered the right to independent life. It is true that other continents are still groaning under colonial exploitation, deprived as we were of the sovereign exercise of the attributes of freedom. Today therefore we ought to change and liberate ourselves also of the insufficiencies and sequels of the colonial system. This liberation which begins with intellectual and mental liberation means returning Africa, reintegrating Africa in its personality, its aspirations, and defend African dignity, and at all times and in all places to remain mobilized and intransigent in the legitimate defence of our continent's superior interests.

This new liberation of Africa is incumbent on each one of our States. We must reconquer all our rights entirely, all our means, our personality, our dignity and remain continually responsible for our destiny. We may well demand new terms of exchange, fair tariffs, effective control of our resources, but will these demands be satisfied if our economies remain vulnerable because of the absence of a minimum of integration or even a minimal policy of concertation ?

Africa is capable of forming an exemplary economic and political community, an entity much larger than others since it covers 27,500,000 square kilometres when the United States of America cover 9,400,000 square kilometres, the Soviet Union 22,400,000 square kilometres, China 9,480,000 square kilometres, and Europe organized into the European Economic Community 1,528,000 square kilometres; Africa is in the lead. Now geographic data must be taken into consideration to determine the economic potential of countries. No, Africa is not poor, and those who say they are poor because their soil is poor say they are poor because they still are unaware of what nature places at their disposal; they neglect the fact that if their countries are apparently not very rich natural resources are immense elsewhere, and these are the resources of the African community. To take the argument further, even if an African country is objectively deprived, it is rich all the same insofar as a policy of economic complementarity between our States can enable us to redistribute wealth.

As we have said Africa has the duty to exploit the immense potential of its soil and subsoil. China's population is 900 millions, but this does not prevent China being a state and a unitary state and a powerful one. That of the USSR is 270 millions with 16 states; the population of the United States of America is 220 million with 51 states. These populations do not prevent these collectivities from being strongly integrated economic communities. With 450 million people and 50 states why should not Africa

constitute just as strongly integrated a Community ? If we want to forge ahead and really convert our differences into powerful factors of identity, personality and influence we must turn to the creation of new structures. Of course it will be up to each Nation, as seen in the examples we have just given, to continue to be at liberty to choose the solution of its own problems. Structures are needed enabling each State to incarnate the whole of the continent and assume the defence of Africa's common interests with more rigour and efficacy. This is not a utopic point of view, it is inscribed in the logic of history. If we do not do it our children will. If our children do not do it our grandchildren will. So we might as well start the joint economic development of our countries now. Pioneers in political liberation we should also be pioneers in economic liberation, in the struggle for mastery of our resources. Africa must unite and, as the regretted Dr Kwame Nkrumah put ^{it} so cleverly : "Africa should be united and march resolutely towards the United States of Africa".

The Africa of tomorrow is in gestation in our consciences today, in our intellectual, technical and technological abilities of today, and especially in our will, our political will to surpass ourselves to be useful to the history of Africa and humanity.

In this struggle therefore each one of us will find a place according to his efficacy, the constancy of his attitudes in the defence of African interests, the objectivity marking all his decisions and attitudes towards African problems.

We have all mentioned here the firmness that should inspire us. This is necessary because one must always be clear. Without logic, without a line of conduct expressing our ideas, a line which should underline our activities, we will never be able to incarnate African virtues correctly. Africa must be united, but Africa is diverse; we ought to make diversity an element of unity, not division. For this reason each one of us was right to speak with vigour, determination and frankness. Frankness, firmness in the defence of ideas have as their only aim to reach agreement so that our choices may be the most judicious possible. This objective has been attained and the resolutions we have adopted should be followed up with the same objectivity, the same frankness so that one may know that, in Sierra Leone, Africa reinforced its unity, and starting with this Summit the common struggle will be more powerful because it is guided by a spirit of unity as characterized by our debates.

As we have said firmness is necessary for action, but conciliation is an imperative by reason of the sovereignty that each State enjoys. No one can dictate to a State what it does not want. Hence conciliation is imperative to the reinforcement of our unity of action. We must always show a spirit of sacrifice and a desire to transcend in order to accelerate our march. For this reason we should dare to pose the real problems, dare to analyse them correctly, dare to make the best choices. But it is not only a question of conceiving happiness, one must also want

and achieve it. The essential is hence resumed in daily action . . . we are to carry out, each in his own country, to translate into concrete terms the desire for progress, the will to unity, the will to democracy which animates African Peoples.

As we said there is a common identity, let us incarnate it. Dialectic in general and particular should dominate all our debates but each one of us, at home, will answer to the particular realities of his country, because the means to be used must be known for action to be efficacious.

This dialectic in general and particular explains then the scrupulous respect of each national sovereignty, all the more so that a country with incomplete or absorbed sovereignty cannot fulfill its tasks in ensembles or play its role in them correctly. In short, each country will be itself and remain so, in an economic ensemble which will enable it to face up to problems whose solution is beyond its means.

We call upon everyone to display more solidarity in diversity, unity of action in diversity, joint political will, mutual respect and love of truth. This last expression is of capital importance in life. Man lives and dies ; the heritage he leaves is the moral personality that his existence transpires and nothing is more eternal than truth. All impulsions that ruin unity or union are caused by lack of love for truth. If men cannot agree on the basis of truth they will know only disunity. Respect of truth and objectivity makes it possible to overcome the worst deadlocks in the solution of problems. The OAU's real weapons therefore will be truth, objectivity, the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of

conciliation, and the common desire to remain together, to work together, to rehabilitate ourselves together, to make Africa a veritable political, economic and socio-cultural entity disposing of all its rights, respected by other states and continents, an entity making a quality contribution to the march of humanity.

Long live the Republic of Sierra Leone !

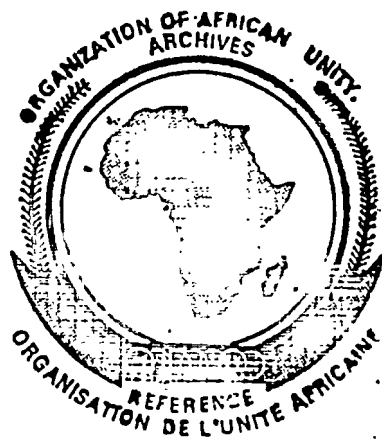
Long live the Organization of African Unity !

Ready for the Revolution !

Ahmed Sékou Touré

—oOo—





1980-07-03

Concerning the Western Sahara speech by president Ahmed Sekou Toure before the 17th Summit of the OAU

Organization of African Unity

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